
THE
COUNTRY SPECTATOR.

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TUESDAY, 5 February, 1793.

Quantà de spe decidi!

TERENT.

Hope blasted by disappointment.

Mr. COUNTRY SPECTATOR,

THE monkey, who had travelled to see the world, returned with an opinion that it abounds with flattery and deceit. My first peregrination from home, has given me very different sentiments of mankind, and taught me in my future intercourse with them, to expect nothing but violations of decorum and invasions of property. You may very easily imagine, from the incidents recorded in my last letter, that I quitted the Metropolis with no aching heart: and, indeed, nothing but my word, which I had given to *Sir Timothy*, should have prevented my returning to my own cottage, where I might have meditated with contemptuous serenity on the folly of those, who are uneasy in the shades of solitude, and who migrate from home in the fruitless search of felicity. No casuistry;

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however, could induce me to profane the obligation of a promise, or to think that so sacred a pledge can on any pretence be redeemed, but by the performance. With these impressions I set out for *Lowestoft*, and augured from an unaccustomed despondency of spirits throughout the journey, a train of disappointments and vexations.

You, Mr. *Country Spectator*, have probably, been a great traveller, and therefore can tell me, if the sensations I felt are peculiar to a novice, or whether you have not experienced certain flutterings of heart, as you approach the period of your journey. Certain it is, that when I entered the town of *Lowestoft*, my mind wonderfully misgave me; and not perceiving any of *Sir Timothy's* domestics at the Inn-door, I was almost afraid to make any enquiry after my friend. Judge, however, of my subsequent feelings, when a brisk Chamber-maid slipped a note into my hand, which she said she had received two days ago, and of which the following are the contents:

Lady Ticklepitcher informs Mr. *Moody* that she and her party are just set out in a fishing vessel to *Holland*. She has taken the flower of both the Universities with her, and proposes to wait three days at the *Hague* in the hope of being joined there by Mr. *M*. A gentleman, who has been buried in the Country for so long a time, will not fail of receiving great amusement in this expedition. *Sir Timothy* proposes to introduce him to his particular friend Profr. *Stalpert Van-*

derweil of *Leyden*, who besides being in possession of the mummies of two *Egyptian* Princes, can actually shew him a complete shirt made of the entrails of a Man. As *Mr. M.* has a taste for classical literature and the useful arts, *Dr. Polyglutt* will obtain him a sight of an original MS. of the learned *Grævius*, and translate to him some of the softest sonnets of that beautiful High Dutch Poet the immortal *Van Haazen*. Our worthy friend *Hexagon* of *Cambridge*, who laughs at all idle speculation, promises to conduct him to *Saardam*, where the famous *Peter the Great* served his apprenticeship to ship-building, and to shew him the very work-shop, in which the *Czar* has inscribed his name upon the door in hob-nails.

Sir Timothy desires his respects to his old friend, and hopes soon to smoke a pipe with him on the roof of a Treck-scut.

Sunday mornng.

It is not my lot, Sir, to be blest with a mind which is of so polished a cast, as to roll over all the inequalities of life, without being impeded in its career. On the other hand, outrageous indignation is the first impulse, which such great provocations, as I have described, excite in me: then the storm, like other storms, subsides, and I dignify the subsequent calm, which is only a natural transition, by the splendid name of reason and philosophy.

IMPRECATIONS against faithless men and mutable women employed me for the better part of an hour; and as every member of the erratic association was entitled to a share of my abuse, I impiously dared to accuse the Classic of being a superficial School-boy,

and to dub the Mathematician a solemn and conceited Blockhead. This paroxysm was both increased and protracted by the officious civilities of my landlady, who, anxious for my good opinion of her courtesy, pressed me to take something after the fatigues of my long journey, and hoped that it would be in her power to render *Lowestoft* as agreeable to me, as she did to a large number of the first Nobility and Gentry, that constantly resorted to her house. "Perhaps, Sir," added she, "your horse may have been taken ill or lame on the road, and your servant may not arrive for a day or two. Every accommodation you may depend upon at the *Crown*; and as to stables, his Majesty's mews, God bless him, are not more comfortable." In such strains as these did she run on for a considerable time; and I verily believe, that by my attempt to suppress my rage I should have burst a blood-vessel, had not a chaise and four, luckily for us both, driven into the yard, when my persecutor vanished in an instant, with a view of applying a similar dose of cordials to palates better calculated to receive them.

WHEN left to myself I gradually became cool, and determined upon a solitary walk by the sea-side, not for the purpose of complaining to the winds and the waves, but of determining whether to obey or to reject the commands of *Lady Tickle-pitcher*. On mature deliberation I resolved not to stir a step off *British* ground. To the *Dutch* language I was an

entire stranger; and had not formed a very favorable opinion of the face of the Country, or the manners of its inhabitants: besides, so little did I rely on the stability of my fair Correspondent, that by the time I had reached the *Hague*, she might, I apprehended, be attending to the clamours of the *Parisian* fish-women in the National assembly. Upon the whole, I judged it more prudent to proceed no farther, but to try the efficacy of a little sea-bathing on shattered nerves, which had been a secondary consideration with me, when I first set out, and formed a kind of under-plot in my motley drama.

WHEN I reflect, Sir, on the whole of my tour, I cannot but wonder that utter apathy or stark madness were not the consequence of it. In the evening of the day I have mentioned, a violent storm of wind arose from the *East*, and continued with very little intermission for the space of eight days. From the cliff nothing was to be seen but waves contending with skies, and ships that were continually firing guns of distress. No boat could land or put off from the shore, and the bathing machines were hauled up for safety. All this time I kept my room in fullen and atrabilious melancholy; and thwarted in every one of my plans I considered myself at once as the victim of malevolence and the sport of Fortune. So fully was I convinced, that if I should continue for a year at *Lovesloft*, the wind would

still blow from the *East*, that without giving any previous notice of my intention, on the ninth day after my arrival I threw myself into the only vacant place in a coach that travelled to *London*, and secretly congratulated myself on turning my face towards home, from whence I determined never more to emerge.

My fellow-travellers were all of them of the most communicative dispositions. Indeed their effusions bore no resemblance whatsoever to conversation, but they were literally what *Pope* calls "the hash of tongues." The *dramatis personæ* consisted of four *filles des Chambres* of different families, who were returning from the sea, and a fat cook-maid, who was going about sixty miles to a new place. Such sympathy was there in these congenial souls, that five minutes produced the strictest intimacy among them, and no one, who had been witness to this scene, would give credit to the character of cold reserve, with which my fair Countrywomen are branded. Such private histories did I learn in the progress of ten miles, not only of the families with which they lived, but of an hundred others in their neighbourhood, that each of them might have assisted the Publisher of the "*New Devil on two Sticks*," with an auxiliary volume. These damsels likewise evinced the fallacy of another maxim, which *Burke*, I think, in his *Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful*, has asserted to be true; namely, that darkness is a source of terror. For as the night approached,

the spirits of these maidens increased to an astonishing pitch, and each declared that she was never so merry in all her *born days*. Still I sat snug in a corner, taking up as little room as I could, and only praying that I might escape their notice; when one of them maliciously observed, that they seemed to have *dumb-founded* the poor gentleman, and the best they could do would be to divert him with a song: then calling to another of the *Conspirators* she said, "Come, Ma'am, do us the favor to let us hear your voice; I can perceive it is a very good one." "Why, Ma'am," replied the other, "as we are among friends, I will oblige you, but only beg that you will excuse all faults:" then addressing herself to me, she said "I hope, Sir, you'll join chorus," and immediately began "Come then all ye social pow'rs," while another hastily drew up the glasses that none of the sound might be lost. It was previously agreed, that each had a right to call upon her neighbour, and so each of them did me the honour severally to apply to me in rotation; and when half choked with choler I grumbled out twenty times "I can't sing," they received my denial with peals of laughter, that perforated my brain.

WHEN they had *boaxed* me sufficiently, the Cook diverted them with the delicate song of "How blest the maid, whose bosom," which they all agreed was very well of its kind, but that they preferred

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something that had more spirit in it, and then with one consent shrieked out "Rule Britannia" for above three quarters of an hour. My ears were rent, my head was split; and when I arrived at *Ipswich* I threw myself on a bed more dead than alive. Having taken a very short refreshment at that place, I proceeded homewards on foot; and have determined never again to trust myself to the licentiousness of a Stage-Coach. After five days quick march I reached home, and will in future content myself with knowing the world by the accounts you may give of it in the *Country Spectator*.

My great acquaintance, I dare say, took pleasure in leading me a wild-goose chase; yet they must pity me for being so dry-wiped by Chambermaids and roasted by a Cook-wench. Still amidst all my misfortunes I could not help smiling at the impotent rage of a Cousin German to those Coach companions, whom I mentioned in my last letter. This fellow, *Hogarth's* own "*Enraged Musician*," met me on my return and pelted me with all kinds of dirt and filth, which he had raked out of the foulest kennels. So badly, however, did he take his aim, that I escaped perfectly safe from his attack; and I sincerely congratulate him on the possession of a temper, which is malicious without the excuse of provocation, and vindictive without the power of injury.

Yrs. Q. Moody.

26 Jan. 1793.

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E. H. Argus